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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Office of Research and Reports

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To:

From:

Subject: French Trucking Industry

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Contribution to Project IP-264

SUMMARY

- 1.) Only between 25 and 30 per cent of the estimated labor force of the road transport industry is unionized.
- 2.) Only less than 13 per cent of the industry's employees belong to the communist-dominated union group.
- 3.) Compared with other French industries the influence of communist-dominated unionism is relatively limited and appears to be declining.
- 4.) There has been no effective strike in the industry since 1945.
- 5.) Only few foreigners are employed as truckers.

(4) Effect of organized labor, especially Communist-controlled labor, on this industry.

(a) The Association of Transport Federations, an affiliate of the National Association of French Employers (Union des Fédérations de Transport, CNPF) has estimated that from 80,000 to 100,000 employees, including bus drivers, are working for trucking firms which

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are its members and that this figure might well be tripled if the employees of the numerous independent trucking firms and of the trucking sections of other industries are added. According to an estimate made in the first part of 1951, the entire road transport industry employed about 315,000 persons.

(b) Long distance truckers are relatively well paid. They have to be capable of performing minor emergency repairs and employers take this requirement into account in determining their wages. Local delivery drivers, however, are poorly paid, earning considerably less than other comparable workers, for example, skilled factory hands.

(c) The most recent collective agreement for the industry, was signed on 21 December 1950. Although the national Transport Union (Fédération Nationale des Moyens de Transport, CGT), a member of the General Confederation of Labor, refused to sign the two annexes dealing specifically with truck drivers and engineers, the provisions of these annexes are applied throughout the industry. Collective agreements in other industries now usually provide that truckers shall be entitled to the same employment conditions as provided by the agreement covering the

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trucking industry proper. The basic provisions of the 1950 agreement are still in force, but wages have been raised several times.

(d) French truckers are well known for their distinct sense of independence. Many of them oppose organization because they feel that union membership would curtail their individual freedom of action in an undue degree. This dislike for unions has been strengthened by the recent policy of the leading (communist-dominated) General Confederation of Labor to pursue political objectives in strikes and other union activities. Consequently, only about 25 per cent of the truckers are unionized, according to an estimate of the Association of Transport Federations.

(e) After the liberation of France the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) was, for several years, the only labor organization recognized by the government as effectively representing the truckers. This situation changed early in 1948 after a group of non-communists, which had left the CGT late in 1947, formed a rival organization, the General Confederation of Labor - Workers Force (CGT - Force Ouvrière, FO). From this time on, not only member unions of the new Workers Force but also unions belonging

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to other central organizations began to recruit members in the trucking industry. The central labor organizations, member unions of which have been most active in the road transport industry, are:

The CGT (General Confederation of Labor; Confédération Générale du Travail). Affiliated with the communist World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), it is dominated by communists subject to USSR leadership. With an estimated national membership of 2 to 2 1/2 million, it is the largest and most powerful French labor organization. Among the members, however, are obviously many non-communists who distrust its political machinations and who have refused to take part in strikes called merely for political purposes. The presence of these members has compelled CGT's leadership to change from overt political to seemingly economic action. This, however, is only a change in strategy; the political objectives of the organization remain the same.

The FO (General Confederation of Labor-Workers Force; CGT - Force Ouvrière). This organization is anti-communist and affiliated with the anti-communist International Confederation of Free Trade Unions

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(ICFTU). It has not been nearly as successful in attracting non-communist CGT members as was hoped for at the time of its ²succession. The total membership in the country probably is not larger than 1 million and its funds are very limited. Though local FO leaders have recently shown a certain disposition to collaborate, for purely economic objectives, with some local CGT leaders, especially such who have been estranged from the Moscow-dominated headquarters, the FO probably will remain anti-communist.

The CFTC (French Confederation of Christian Workers; Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens). It is an anti-communist federation of unions and belongs to the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions. The national membership is around 900,000.

The CNSA (National Confederation of Autonomous Unions; Confédération Nationale des Syndicats Autonomes). This relatively new organization is considered reliably non-communist. Claiming 20,000 members in the country in 1950, it appears to be gaining in membership and

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influence. It is not affiliated with any political party or international labor organization. Some anti-communist, rival labor leaders, however, have alleged that elements close to the DeGaullist "Rally of the French People" (RPF) were instrumental in its formation.

The CGSI (General Confederation of Independent Unions; Confédération Générale des Syndicats Indépendants). Formed after the second World War, it is generally considered straight DeGaullist, though rival unions have alleged that it includes some communists of Moscow and Trotskyist taint and some anarchists. The Confederation claimed a membership of 200,000 in 1950; but it probably did not exceed 150,000.

The CGC (General Confederation of Managerial Employees; Confédération Générale des Cadres). This federation includes unions representing the vast majority of unionized members of management, especially those on higher levels. It is independent, non-communist, and otherwise politically neutral. Its membership in all industries has been estimated to be between 120,000 and 150,000.

(f) The above data refer to the total memberships of the individual central

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federations, which also organize truckers, in all industries in which they are active. They show the character and relative nation-wide importance of the groups as such. This section deals specifically with the comparative strength of these same union groups in road transport. In this industry estimated CGT membership was 120,000 in 1946. In 1950 it was, however, down to 40,000. In the same year, it was estimated that 25,000 employees in the industry belonged to the autonomous movement, 14,000 to the FD, 7,700 to the independent group, and 6,000 to the Christian sector. Accordingly, only about 29.5 per cent (92,700) of the 315,000 employees of the road transport industry were unionized in 1950, and less than 13 per cent (40,000) of the industry's employees belonged to the communist union group.

(g) A survey conducted by the French Ministry of Public Works and Transportation in 1951 shows the comparative strength of the specific transport workers' unions active in the trucking industry. In organizing actual truck drivers, the non-communist, independent National Truckers Union (Fédération Nationale des Chauffeurs Routiers) now shares first place with the communist-dominated CGT National Transport Union (Fédération Nationale

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des Moyens de Transport). Moreover, the former union is beginning to draw ahead of the latter. The non-communist National FO Transport Union (Fédération Nationale FO des Transports) and the Christian Transport Workers Union (Fédération Française des Syndicats Chrétiens d'Ouvriers des Transports sur Route et Similaires) rank third and fourth among the truck drivers.

As to organization of white collar and lower technical personnel of the trucking industry proper, the different union movements rank in importance as follows:

Union of Christian Salaried Employees, Technicians, and Supervisory Employees (Fédération Française des Syndicats Chrétiens d'Employés et Techniciens et Agents de Maîtrise, CFTC), anti-communist.

National FO Transport Union (Fédération Nationale FO des Transports), anti-communist.

National Transport Union (Fédération Nationale des Moyens de Transport, CGT), communist-dominated.

The relative strength of the unions among organized engineers and managerial employees is:

National Union of Managerial Employees in the Transport Industry

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(Syndicat National des Cadres de Direction et de la Maîtrise des Transports, CGQ), non-communist.

National FO Transport Union (Fédération Nationale FO des Transports), anti-communist.

Federation of Engineers' and Managerial Employees' Unions (Fédération Française des Syndicats d'Ingénieurs et Cadres, CFTC), anti-communist.

National Union of Engineers and Managerial Employees in the Transport Industry (Syndicat National des Ingénieurs et Cadres des Transports, CGT), communist-dominated.

In the Paris region, the CGT group is the strongest. But most of its members are local delivery drivers. Most active among and for the long distance truckers everywhere in the industry apparently is the independent (non-communist) National Truckers Union. It has sought to improve conditions on the road and has set up stops where truckers can eat and sleep at minimum cost. Although concentrating, until recently, on driver membership, this organization is now organizing other types of employees as well.

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In this respect, it has been following the general development in the industry, which has been away from craft unionism and toward industrial unionism.

(h) There has been no effective strike in the trucking industry since 1945, although the CGT has on several occasions attempted to organize industrial warfare.

(5) Restrictions on employment of foreigners by French trucking concern

There are no official restrictions concerning employment of foreigners in the French trucking industry. The unions do not favor the hiring of foreigners if qualified Frenchmen are available. The employers, by and large, take a non-discriminatory attitude and make their employment dependent upon qualification and possession of the required work permit. Since, however, sufficient numbers of qualified French workers have as yet been available, only few foreign truckers have been hired. Most of these work in the border districts of the country.

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